

Asheville City Council
Planning and Economic Development Committee

11:30 a.m., November 19, 2008
Economic Development Office Conference Room

Minutes

Present: Vice-Mayor Jan Davis, Councilman Bill Russell

Staff: Gary Jackson, Sam Powers, Stephanie Monson, Sasha Vrtunski, Curt Euler,
Captain Darryl Fisher

Guests: Terri Morin, Michelle Pugliese, Peggy Irwin, Stewart David, Terri David

The Planning and Economic Development Committee met on November 19, 2008, at 29 Haywood Street. Vice-Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes from the September 17, 2008, meeting were approved as written.

2. Updates

EDO

Sam Powers, Economic Development Director, gave the update. Three years ago, the City and County, working with stakeholder groups, formed the Asheville HUB, for collaboration efforts and leveraging of resources for economic development. The HUB Alliance agreed to bring in an outside consultant to look at the overall structure of the twenty economic development organizations in the area. The consultant is finishing his recommendation and report. The report will be presented to the HUB Alliance and then made available to City Council.

Animal Control Ordinance

Curt Euler, city attorney, gave the update. In July, the City embarked upon a process of reviewing the animal control ordinance. A public meeting was held in July. Staff is in the process of vetting the issues, and plan to go back to the public before going before Council, with a target date of February or March. The five policy issues involving a revision to the City's current ordinance under review are:

- 1) policy issues for chickens;
- 2) chaining of dogs on private property;
- 3) unrestrained/dangerous dogs;
- 4) feral cats/countdown to zero;
- 5) bears in the city limits.

Since these are neighbor/land use issues, Vice-Mayor Davis encouraged Mr. Euler to talk about the process, flesh out the issues, reach out to special interest groups, and gather best practices information before revising the ordinance.

3. Status Reports

Downtown Master Plan

Sasha Vrtunski, project manager, gave the update. A working group of the master Plan Advisory Panel is participating in a small group process designed to move the group toward consensus on certain issues. The panel still expects the comments section of the plan to include majority and minority reports in an effort to illustrate the spectrum of thought within the community; additionally, this larger consensus is desired in efforts to move forward with approval and implementation phases. There will be an Advisory Committee meeting in early December to review the economic development piece of the master plan to review the schedule for the planning process. The schedule also (tentatively) includes a review by the Downtown Commission in early January; a public presentation of the draft in mid to late January; and initial presentation to City Council in February.

RFP Sites

- 1) Ralph & Choctaw (Gaston & Congress): This area is in the process of being rezoned; Council will participate in the public hearing for this conditional zoning on December 2. Staff is working interdepartmentally to advance the design and implementation of the Town Branch Greenway as a part of the redevelopment process.
- 2) Aston Gateway: Stephanie Monson gave the update. This is the park maintenance property, which MHO is interested in acquiring for affordable housing. The City is looking into the feasibility of moving park maintenance to the current armory site on Shelburne Road. For both sites, land use planning, partnership opportunities and the relationship of the sites within the neighborhoods are being examined.
- 3) Haywood Street: Sam Powers gave the update. There is a proposal on the table from McKibbin hotel group for a Weston Element hotel. The City is finishing due diligence on the offer, and on the covenants and conditions of the sale to ensure that development occurs in the manner that the City envisions.
- 4) Eagle Market Street: Sam Powers gave the update. The developer and the development corporation have agreed to do an approximately 46-unit condominium, with retail space and limited parking. All the participants are minority owned businesses. They have asked for the exclusive rights for development; the City will continue its role as being interested in the plans and long-range goals. The challenge is the current financial conditions, and the scale of the project within an historic district.

4. Presentations

3-1-1 Network

Terri Morrin, Daniel Communications, gave the presentation. (See powerpoint presentation on website.)

Southern Appalachian Highland Conservancy (SAHC): RE Property Near Asheville Watershed

Michelle Pugliese, Land Protection Director of the Southern Appalachian Highland Conservancy (SAHC), gave the presentation. (See powerpoint presentation on website.) SAHC would like the City to update the existing conservation easement and find ways for the City to partner with SAHC. The committee encouraged Ms. Pugliese to submit a proposal on behalf of SAHC to Mr. Jackson, who will then have staff review it and determine whether it should go to Council as a staff recommendation, or simply as a proposal from the SAHC.

5. Public Comment

Peggy Irwin spoke on behalf of Chain Free Asheville. She has been working with Officer Brenda Sears, Animal Control, to craft an ordinance that is reasonable to implement. (Ms. Irwin provided all Council members with an informational notebook, which is on file at the Office of Economic Development.) Mr. Stewart David also spoke on behalf of Chain Free Asheville.

Terri David spoke in support of the City setting a standard for the humane slaughter of chickens.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.